

**GEAR!**  
BUYER'S GUIDE

# Snare Drums

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Snare drums are not what they used to be. In the past, there were only a few sizes and a few companies. Today, there is an overwhelming number of snare drums on the market, with different shell materials, different hardware options, different sizes, and different prices. Making a choice nowadays is not easy.

Typically, snare drums range in size from 3 x 13 piccolo drums to 8 x 14 "rock" drums. A few deviations from this are found in certain 12-inch diameter drums, as well as 9-, 10-, and even 12-inch depth snare drums. The music you'll be playing will dictate the size of the drum you'll need. However, large sizes do not mean expressly for loud rock and roll playing; conversely, thin picco-

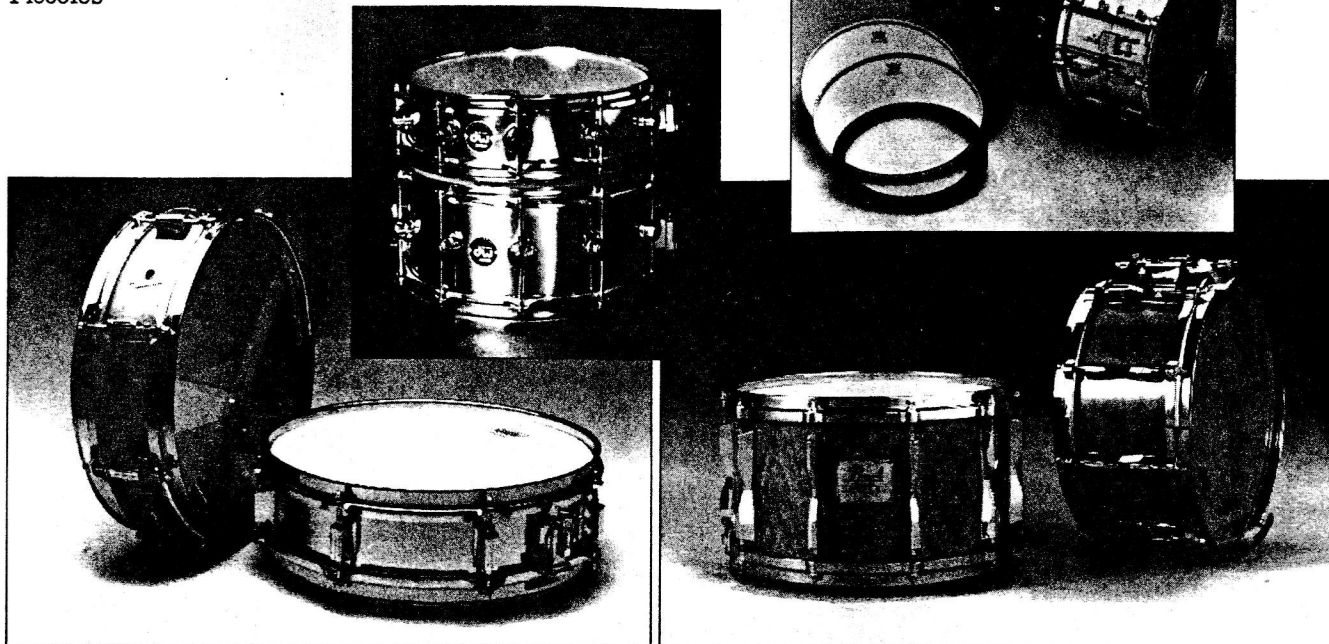
los are not just for articulate playing. Piccolo snares, along with 12-inch "sopranos," make for great auxiliary snare drums in some situations, and can certainly be used as primary drums, even in a rock context, due to their piercing pitch and volume. Still, the "standard" snare drum size is between 5 x 14 and 6 1/2 x 14 — that in itself has not changed much over the years.

The most popular shell materials are steel and maple, but there are others such as fiberglass, bronze, birch, beech, aluminum, brass, phenolic, exotic woods, etc. These varied shell types all present their own unique sound characteristics, and you should listen to as many different drums as you can.

The "battle of the plys" still rages on. Some drummers argue that a thinner ply shell sounds better, while others contend that more plys are better. A problem here is that one manufacturer's 9-ply shell, for instance, may be thinner than another manufacturer's. So apparently, the number of plys really doesn't matter; the key is the thickness of the shell. A thin shell vibrates more readily than a thick shell, and some drums promote this resonance by installing isolators and other devices so no contact is made between the wood and the metal fittings (Sonor's HiLite is one example).

Other variables play important roles in the overall drum sound —

Clockwise from right: Drum Workshop Collectors' Series; Remo Liberator Pro Snare Kit; Pearl CZX Series; Ludwig Piccolos



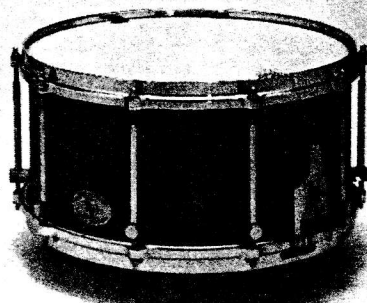
hoops, strainers, snare wires, lugs, and ventholes. A die-cast hoop has more "bite" to the sound than a pressed steel hoop does, but some drummers claim this bite also extends to drumsticks, as die-cast rims seem to chew up sticks more.

The more tension points a snare drum has, the easier it will tune, and the more articulate the sound can be, since the head tension is dispersed over smaller areas. Normally, a snare drum will have eight to ten tuning rods per side.

Air dispersion also affects a drum's sound. While most drums have single ventholes, an increasing number of models are experimenting with two or three vents for quicker release of air from the shell, giving a drier, livelier sound.

Snare wires can be steel, aircraft cable, nylon, or gut, for varied sound and response. Snare strainers (the throw off and butt) are available in three basic types: side throw, center throw, and parallel. The first two types are usually no-fuss and pretty simple in design, releasing the snare

wires at one side. Parallel strainers maintain even tension on the snare wires, while dropping them from both sides of the drum simultaneously. This type of strainer allows fine tuning at both the throwoff and butt ends. Whichever strainer you choose, be sure it stays secure when



**Noble & Cooley 7-inch Classic**

playing, and also listen to the noise of the snares releasing and tensioning. In some instances, the noise may be a factor in choosing a certain strainer.

Cosmetics are important in 1990, and manufacturers realize this by making their drums available in shiny colored plastic coverings, high gloss lacquers, wood veneers, golden bronze, mirror chrome, engraved metal, direct color impregnations,

and other finishes. Sometimes the drum hoops and fittings are "esoteric," like Pearl's Free-Floating snare, Sonor's copper-plated HiLite Exclusive series, and various other drums with black hardware. While a different look is something you may be after, remember, it will cost you more than a standard drum, and replacement parts may be harder to come by on the road. Sound should be your primary consideration in any case.

When you walk into the music store to make your purchase, you should already have planned out your budget, and know what sound you came in to buy. Be prepared to spend a little more, just in case there's that killer drum you must have. After nailing down the amount your wallet can afford, you can then check out drums in different shells and different sizes, to find the one you'll be happy playing night after night. Consider all of the brands and models available. Just because your favorite drummer this week plays a certain brand, doesn't mean it's right for you. Keep your options and your ears open.

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## Popular Snare Drums

COMPANY	MODEL	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
CB Percussion	IS413M	4.5 x 13 maple piccolo snare, part of the MS Series of snares distributed by Kaman. Standard features include 2.3mm Power Hoops, 2mm castings, throw off and snare restrainer. Also available in chrome, brass and black (maple), and in 5.5 x 14, and 6.5 x 14 sizes.	\$209.50
CB Percussion	Gibraltar FM650	6.5 x 14 Free-Floating shell system manufactured by Pearl for Kaman. Available in 8 x 14 maple, 3.5 x 14 brass piccolo, 6.5 x 14 brass, and 6.5 x 14 chrome.	\$385
Drum Workshop	Collectors Series	6 x 14 maple shell with reinforcing hoops at the top and bottom. Available in over 150 hand-lacquered finishes, and in 5-, 7-, and 8-inch depths.	\$480
Drum Workshop	Collectors Series	6.5 x 14 high copper content brass shell. Available in brass, chrome, and black chrome finishes. Also available with custom hand engraving, and in 4 x 14 and 6.5 x 15 configurations.	\$570
Gretsch	G4154	6.5 x 14, 6-ply maple shell with 10 lugs. Also available with 20 lugs, and in 8 x 14 configuration with 20 lugs. A variety of finishes is also available.	\$425
Gretsch	G4166	6 x 14 chrome-plated brass shell with 20 lugs. Has die cast hoops on top and bottom. Also available with a polished brass finish with chrome hardware.	\$475
Ludwig	Piccolo	3 x 13 6-ply maple shell, vertical lugs cast in zinc, polished and hard chrome plated; has heavy gauge batter and snare hoops, stamped steel and brass snare strainer with lever throw-off action accepts cord or tape. Ensemble medium coated batter heads and 13-inch Resonant snare heads are standard. Also available with a bronze shell.	\$350
Noble & Cooley	JB147	7 x 14 maple snare drum, part of the Classic Series available in clear, maple, white, red and black finishes. 1/4-inch single piece maple shell with 10-lug tensioning system and unique snare/bell/strainer/wire configuration. Also available in 5-, 8-, and 3 3/4- (piccolo) inch depths.	\$740
Noble & Cooley	NC14S	7 x 14 single piece, 1/4-inch solid maple shell with 10-lug tensioning system, and solid brass strainer is part of the Star Series. Also features wide nodular mounted reinforcing hoops on the top and bottom of inside of the shell. Available in clear, white, red, maple and black finishes.	\$799
Pearl	CZX5314D	6 x 14 CZX series snare constructed of 10 mm, 8-ply birds-eye maple with a clear lacquer finish. Available in 8-inch depth.	\$720
Pearl	CL5314D-BR	6.5 x 14 Custom Classic series snare drum constructed of 7.5 mm one piece maple shell with brass plated hardware and amber lacquer. Available in 5.5 inch depth. Also available with chrome plated hardware, and in piano black or arctic white lacquer.	\$660
Pork Pie	Custom Snares	6 x 14 hard rock maple, finished in any color. Has custom lugs machined from solid brass, and available in chrome, black chrome, and nickel. Heavy duty hoops standard on all drums, along with die cast batter hoops. Also available in 4-, 5-, 7-, and 8-inch depths.	\$505
Premier	1036	6.5 x 14 chrome plated steel shell, "beaded" for extra strength, has 10 lugs, triple flanged steel rims, and conventional strainer.	\$260
Premier	2002	6.5 x 14 cross-laminated birch shell with beech bearing edge reinforcements, hand-rubbed lacquer finish, parallel action strainer and high stress rims. Available in 8-inch depth.	\$440
Remo	Mastertouch	10-lug 3.5 x 14 piccolo snare with mirror gold Quadura® covering. All Remo drums have an Acousticon® shell, a lamination of wood fibrous material, bonded together with a hard silica resin and treated with other resins. Has dual adjustment snare throw off.	\$237
Remo	Liberator	8 x 14 Pro Snare Kit PowerSnap comes with three pretuned Ambassador batter head clear snareside head, 3-stage Muff'l system, wire and GutTone snares, and heavy-duty case. Chrome Quadura® cover with gold stripe.	\$414
Solid Percussion	MS5500-2	5.5 x 14 solid maple snare shell, available in ruby, black sapphire, crystal clear lacquer, red, black, white, and black with blackout hardware. Also available in 7-inch depth.	\$795
Solid Percussion	RO5500	5.5 x 14 solid red oak shell with crystal clear lacquer. Also available in 4- and 7-inch depths.	\$895
Sonor	EHD500	Hilite Series 5 3/4 x 14, 9-ply maple shell with copper hardware. Also available 7- depth. There is also a 5 3/4 x 14 with chrome hardware, also available in 7-inch depth.	\$960
Sonor	HLD580	8 x 14 beech shell. Available in steel, bronze, and also in a 4-inch depth with a bronze shell.	\$850
Tama	AW526	6.5 x 14 8 ply 7mm, Artwood Series maple shell with cam lever strainer, 2-way lugs and die cast hoops. Available in piano black, piano white high gloss lacquer or birdseye maple and amber wood finishes with high gloss lacquer. Also available in 5-, 8, and 3 1/4- inch (piccolo) depths.	\$599.95
Tama	PM326	6.5 x 14 Power Metal Series drum has a brass shell with smooth brass finish. Features a cam lever strainer, 2-way lugs, and 2.3 mm steel "mighty hoops." Also available in 5-, 8-, and 3 1/4-inch (piccolo) depths.	\$499.95
Yamaha	SD496	6.5 x 14, 10-lug brass snare drum. Also available in 5.5-, 8-, and 3.5-inch (piccolo) depths.	\$500
Yamaha	SD296	6.5 x 14, 10-lug steel snare drum. Also available in 5.5-inch depth. There is also an 8-lug version available in 6.5 x 14 and 5.5 x 14 configurations.	\$405

Based on information supplied by manufacturers. Prices vary on size and materials.